

REMARKS

Claims 2-3 and 8-9 are pending in this application, all of which have been amended.

Claims 1, 4-7 and 10 have been canceled. No new claims have been added.

The Examiner has required copies of the foreign references AF, AG and AG cited on the PTO-1449 form filed in this application.

Although these references were supplied in the parent application and the filing of the Information Disclosure Statement without them in this divisional application was proper, Applicants have attached them hereto as a courtesy to the Examiner.

Claims 1, 2 and 5-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite.

Accordingly, claims 2 and 8 have been amended to correct the noted instances of indefiniteness, and the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,252,270 to Haardt et al. (hereinafter "Haardt et al.").

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Haardt et al. discloses a method of forming foam moldings having varied density regions. Fillings of various density made from polyolefin foam particles are introduced into the individual chambers of a mold divided into at least two chambers by removable dividing walls, removing the dividing walls, and heating the particles by passing steam or hot air into the mold so that they soften, expand and weld to one another.

The cavity of the mold is divided into at least two chambers by dividing walls, the chambers being connected via supply lines to storage tanks for polyolefin foam particles of the same or different density, and the dividing walls being designed as retractable cores connected to pressure cylinders via rods.

The apparatus of Haardt et al. must contain air orifices, such as core vents and core vent holes, in order to form the foam mold, in contrast to the present invention, which lacks these air orifices to provide an "attractive surface devoid of marks produced air orifices 18", as disclosed on page 67, lines 3-6 of the specification of the instant application.

Furthermore, claims 2 and 8 recite fixed partition members, while the apparatus of Haardt et al. utilizes movable walls so that a driving means to drive the walls is required. Therefore, if partitioned molding spaces are increased, the driving system must become complicated. As a result, the manufacturing cost of the molding apparatus would be increased.

The filling pressures in adjacent partitioned molding spaces should be controlled so as not to be different from each other when filling the material beads. Otherwise there is a possibility that the partitioning members may be deformed by the pressure difference.

The flow of filling air is disturbed by the partitioning members. As a result, the filling property of material beads is lowered.

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

Regarding the three (3) foreign references identified as Documents AF, AG and AH in the IDS filed July 11, 2003, copies of which are attached hereto, Applicants respectfully submit

the following arguments regarding the distinctions between these references and the present invention.

First, document AG relates to an in-mold foam molding which does not use teeth, so it is unrelated to the present invention.

Document AF discloses a foamable resin molding apparatus, wherein a foamable resin molding material is filled into a molding chamber within a cavity and the filled foamable resin molding material is heat-expanded to mold a foamable resin molding product. A plurality of spaces are formed in the above-mentioned molding chamber 60. The first space 61 to which the first foamable resin molding material 71 is filled, and the second space 62 to which the second foamable resin molding material 72 is filled, said second space being adjacent to the first space, are provided in the plurality of spaces. Partitioning members 50 and 55 are provided at a boundary portion of the above-mentioned first space 61 and the second space 62 in the molding chamber 60, and a gap is provided at the partitioning members 50 and 55 such that the first foamable resin molding material 71 filled into the first space 61 and the second foamable resin molding material 72 filled into the second space 62 can be contacted to each other.

In document AF, rectangular wave-like teeth 51 are disclosed as partitioning members 50 and 55, said teeth being provided at an outer peripheral portion of the mounting member 54. Slits 83 and 84 are formed in the foam molding product 80 by partitioning members 50 and 55. Consequently, it is structured in such a manner that the foam molding product can be folded by a small power around the center of slits 83 and 84.

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measures to move the teeth are required. As a result, some problems are incurred, e.g., the teeth are folded or bent in the molding chamber, the operation is troubled, etc.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 2-3 and 8-9, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: Documents AF, AG, AH from IDS of July 11, 2003

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